

Irvington Recreation and Parks Department

Proposed Dog Park Analysis

Investigation of Dog Park issue by Irvington Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee (RPAC) and Staff

Recent Timeline:

- 1) Irvington Rec and Parks Superintendent was contacted by village residents in March 2014 with a request to consider the development of a dog park in the village.
- 2) Residents attended the monthly RPAC public meeting to present their request on April 2, 2014
- 3) RPAC agreed to investigate possible locations using information from prior research in 2009, and retain the services of consultant Marilyn Glasser (see credentials attached) paid for by interested residents
- 4) Possible locations were investigated by the consultant, residents, RPAC and staff
- 5) A Public meeting was held on October 28, 2014, publicized in Mayor's newsletter where recommendation were made for further investigation of the "Irvington Woods Reservoir" site after almost unanimous approval by those present
- 6) A Second meeting held on February 4, 2015, attended by interested members of the public. .
- 7) Superintendent makes presentation to public at RPAC Meeting on February 25, 2015
- 8) Superintendent presents findings to Mayor and Village Board at public meeting held on March 16, 2015
- 9) Meeting held with members of the ECB, IWC, RPAC, Staff and Dr Glasser on March 24, 2015.
- 10) Determination to hold additional public meeting and to disseminate information to the community prior to the meeting

General Considerations:

- 1) Funding to come from public
- 2) Membership permits purchased– numbers limited
- 3) Dog owners must be on site at all times
- 4) Limit number of dogs per owner on site
- 5) Grass parks – except for transition area, area for water and benches
- 6) Park hours - 7am - dusk

Criteria developed in assessing sites for potential dog park:

- 1) **Size** - minimum 1 acre (anything smaller inadequate for dog parks)
 - a) must include transition entrance and separate areas - one for all dogs and one for only small dogs
 - b) dogs need substantial area for exercise
 - c) significant area needed to avoid issues with territoriality and resulting issues of dog and owner safety
 - d) smaller areas are more difficult to maintain and “keep green”
- 2) **Locale** – must be accessible
- 3) **Minimal proximity to existing park venues and facilities**
 - a) Needed to prevent dog owners from leaving their dogs in dog park unsupervised to attend other park venues (e.g. watch ballgame, attend to children playing in playground) which becomes a safety issue for other dogs and owners
 - b) Needed to avoid safety issues for others using existing park facilities, particularly children
- 4) **Minimal proximity to homeowner’s property**
- 5) **Parking**
 - a) Currently researching numbers; current numbers may be outdated due to increased usage of dog parks
 - b) Need to have ADA accessible parking included
- 6) **Access to water**
 - a) Needed for dogs and their owners
 - b) Needed for maintenance
- 7) **Terrain**
 - a) Needs to be flat with minimal slopes to maintain sight lines
- 8) **ADA accessibility**
 - a) Needed from parking and from transition area to separate dog areas (see above)

9) Shade areas

- a) Pre-existing or man-made

10) Access for maintenance

- a) Truck access for equipment (mowing and garbage removal)

11) Access for supervision

- a) Police, Greenburgh Animal Control, Park Staff

Venues considered and comments specific to those locations:

1) Scenic Hudson Park

- a) Contacted by representative of Scenic Hudson organization and informed of their opposition to such usage
- b) Very limited area for dog park location
- c) Too many other park facilities affected
- d) Control of membership questionable

2) Matthiessen Park

- a) Primary facility usage by children and picnicking families
- b) Very limited area for location (northern end of park)
- c) Limited by Metro North access
- d) Would prevent usage of area for existing village events (fireworks, Rocktoberfest) due to less available acreage
- e) Very long walk through park to get to dog park entrance
- f) ADA accessibility at entrance would need to be created
- g) Membership limited to village residents only

3) Memorial Park – Middle Park by tennis courts

- a) Too small – 1/3 – 1/2 acre
- b) ADA accessibility extremely difficult
- c) Access to Middle Park from Aqueduct controlled by New York State
- d) Directly impacts homeowners
- e) Parking would have to be in town or along Dows Lane

4) Dows Lane and Broadway

- a) Too small
- b) Course of stream makes building of park difficult
- c) Too close to ball fields

5) Firestone property off Sunnyside Lane

- a) Large impact on neighborhood homeowners
- b) Large costs for construction in marsh area

6) Irvington Woods Reservoir Area

- a) Isolated for supervision
- b) Location at major entrance to woods and trails
- c) Rates well for size
- d) Some parking already exists

7) Irvington Woods O'Hara Nature Center

- a) Too small
- b) Poor parking
- c) ADA accessibility issues

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

We are very concerned about potential environmental issues. Whichever site may be chosen will require a full environmental review process which will identify the specific environmental issues for that site and potential mitigation of those issues under SEQRA

Environmental issues already identified include

- 1) Drainage
- 2) Parking
- 3) Noise
- 4) Wildlife

Recommendation Reached after evaluation: The Irvington Woods Reservoir Site

Based on our research thus far, RPAC and Staff recommend the **Irvington Woods Reservoir Site** as the best location for a potential dog park. This site best meets the minimum standards we have determined, most significantly

- 1) Size
- 2) Locale
- 3) Minimal proximity from homeowners
- 4) Water availability
- 5) Terrain
- 6) Potential for adequate parking

We continue to survey and visit existing dog parks in Westchester County

Marilynn R. Glasser, Ed.D., CPRP, CPSI

- ◆ Doctorate in Recreation Services and Resource Management from New York University
- ◆ Masters in Community and Outdoor Recreation from Springfield College
- ◆ Certified Park and Recreation Professional
- ◆ New York State Public School Teacher Permanent Certification
- ◆ Certified Playground Safety Inspector
- ◆ Certified Early Childhood Outdoor Play Inspector
- ◆ Active, longtime member of the National Recreation and Park Association, the New York State Recreation and Park Society and the Westchester Recreation and Park Society (has held both elected and appointed positions in the state and local societies and has received numerous professional awards and certificates)
- ◆ 28 years municipal recreation and parks administration (1/77 – 6/05)
- ◆ Over 30 years adjunct college teaching (recreation, parks and leisure services courses); currently an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Lehman College in the Bronx, NY (1/81 – present)
- ◆ President, Parks and Pastimes, Inc. (providing recreation, parks and leisure services consulting specializing in dog parks, playground safety and education/training)
- ◆ Frequent speaker on a variety of professional topics at local, state and national association conferences
- ◆ Author of numerous articles for professional publications (especially on dog parks and playground safety)
- ◆ As a trainer for Playground Medic, a playground safety company, conduct playground supervision training and playground inspection training programs for schools, child care facilities and parks and recreation departments
- ◆ Personal leisure interests include golf, antique collectibles, the 1950s, dogs and cats, Cape Cod, Florida, guitar, nature, classic automobiles, art deco, Rye Playland, fishing and outdoor events – flea markets, art shows, concerts, etc.
- ◆ Volunteer involvement has included agencies such as Hudson Valley Community Services (formerly AIDS-Related Community Services), the Penn-Monto Field Hockey Foundation, the Art Deco Society of New York and the Westchester County Historic Preservation Advisory Committee
- ◆ Recent/current projects:
 - Author of the first professional book on dog parks, “Dog Park Design, Development, and Operation” (2013)
 - Wrote a chapter on “Supervision” for a new parks and recreation textbook (2014)
 - Created the “Guess-ti-Mate”; a “Guess How Many...” contest display unit being marketed to recreation and parks agencies, community centers, libraries, schools, businesses, etc.
 - Received the Volunteer Service Award from Hudson Valley Community Services (2015)